

# New Unity Movement

## The WORKER



**Knowledge is Power**

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### DIGNITY? WHAT DIGNITY?

The primary concern of the ANC appears to be rebuilding the 'Brand' of the ANC. They are very concerned about the damage done to the 'brand' by JZ. The damage done to the country by their blunders over these past 24 years, are of less concern.

These political reprobates shielded JZ from 783 charges and 8 votes of 'no confidence' BECAUSE he was one of them. It's like family shielding an errant and troublesome family member from justice - because he shares the family name. The same thing has happened routinely since 1994. How many police chiefs, commissioners, generals etc. have fallen foul of the law since 1994? How many have been ANC members?

The ANC has no problem with the millions who died during Mbeki's administration because of his steadfast denial that HIV caused AIDS - and thereby denied them ARV's. They have no problem with the Esidimeni dead who died without dignity - and we need to ask, how many of those implicated in the shambles, are ANC members?

The workers who were gunned down at Marikana, what about their dignity? What about the people in Lusikisiki who have been without water since Sir Donald

Currie donated the Currie Cup to white South Africa! What about their dignity?

What about the dignity of old age pensioners who DIE in the heat or cold, while queuing for their measly survival stipends?

And Kwezi? What about her dignity?

What about the children who sit under trees - being messed on by 'fowls of the air' while getting an education? What about their dignity? We have plummeted to the bottom of the educational rankings since 1994, and yet we have a ruling party concerned about their brand.

What about kids who fall into pit latrines and drown in waste? What about their dignity? What about the number of infant deaths? The deaths due to a lack of dialysis facilities at public hospitals? People drowning in their own waste & bodily fluids while their families watch. What about their dignity?

Don't also come with the argument about the legacy of apartheid! You are actually mismanaging apartheid. You have been unable to defeat it, and you have merely rebranded it, and made racism vogue.

### DIGNITY! WHAT DIGNITY?

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## WHY CHANGES TO SA'S LABOUR LAWS ARE AN ASSAULT ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

When Ramaphosa was delivering his 106<sup>th</sup> celebratory speech and ostensibly giving thousands hope for a better future, one thought of the millions of the poor who will once again be disappointed by false promises.

Ramaphosa, an outspoken former trade unionist is part of cabinet, which condoned the draft changes to the Labour Laws, seemingly agreed to by major Labour Federations including COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU. These amendments presently under consideration are more than just a slap in the face of workers. According to reports, these amendments will severely curtail workers' rights. Has Ramaphosa abandoned the views he held when being secretary-general of the National Union of Mineworkers?

The three bills before parliament are Amendments to the **Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the National Minimum Wage Act and the Labour Relations Act**. These amendments propose major changes to the Labour Laws and together constitute an assault on worker rights. In addition, Labour Brokers (Temporary Employment Services) were accepted in 2015 by the ANC despite opposition from within its ranks.

How will these bills affect workers?

➤ The amendment to the Labour Relations Act (LRA) will place restrictions on the right to strike which is guaranteed under the constitution. This is done by enforcing a compulsory secret strike ballot. Whilst this has been done to ostensibly minimise violent strikes, it nevertheless inhibits and undermines the collective nature of a strike.

➤ Enforcing more bureaucratic red tape before embarking on strike action. The LRA now envisages an Advisory Arbitration Panel, which would be led by a commissioner of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). This can only favour employers.

➤ Imposing default picketing rules as a condition to exercise the right to strike

➤ Impose starvation National Minimum Wage of R20,00 per hour (p/h), without a minimum monthly wage this despite the R3 500 minimum wage set which is already unacceptably low. Those that work under 40 hours a week or part-time workers are unlikely to earn R3500 p.m.

➤ Set differentiated National Minimum Wages for farm workers, domestic workers and Public Works workers. Farm workers will receive a minimum of R18,00 p/h, Domestic Workers R15,00 p/h. THESE ARE SLAVE WAGES!!

➤ Threaten to abolish important conditions of employment contained in the Sectoral Determinations

➤ Make enforcement of workplace rights almost unworkable.

If passed into law, these amendments will prove to be a defeat for workers. The most powerful tool of workers, the strike weapon will have been emasculated. The resultant loss of the bargaining tool will minimise increase in earnings. This will increase inequalities in SA. These Bills will also make protracted strikes such as the strike on the platinum belt highly unlikely.

None of the Federations to our knowledge had a mandate to agree to such deals. Why then did Cosatu, FEDUSA and NACTU enter negotiations on this matter? Neither the new trade union federation, the SA Federation of Trade Unions nor the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) have ostensibly issued any statement condemning the actions by the negotiators.

All trade unions however claim to represent the interests of the working class. However, union membership has been declining at an alarming rate. Only about 25% of the workforce is unionised. The demands for worker rights have toned down as the character of unions has changed.

Besides the drop in membership, what are the reasons for the change in character of unions?

In recent years, the labour movement has undergone massive changes. More unionised members are becoming professional (Public Service Unions), skilled and semi-skilled workers with more unionised members in full-time permanent employ. What this reflects is the changing nature of the class positions of the workers. It also means that the majority have become less sensitive to minimum wages and its implications for the poor. This makes for more union members aspiring to, or having middle class values.

Without strong unions, there is no effective counter against corporate power. All of us must push back against the assault on workers' rights. We must push back against the anti-worker assault on the rights of our worker. If we want a better, fairer society and a more just economy, we have to stand with the workers of SA.



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### **Ramaphosa and Gigaba have allowed a good crisis to go to waste**

Budgets do not represent the sum total of a government's economic policy. They indicate the direction of things to come. As many suspected, the 2018 budget will hit poor and working class people harder. They will bear the brunt of expenditure and tax proposals meant to resolve the debt crisis the economy was heading towards.

**Gigaba and Ramaphosa have set us on a path of economic regression. The optimism that greeted the demise of former President Jacob Zuma and Ramaphosa's ascent to power will be eroded. It will be eroded by a futile attempt at going back to GEAR and an outdated reliance on the Mineral Energy Complex. The poverty, unemployment and inequality these strategies have spawned will get worse.**

This budget is GEAR-like, in the deep cuts in expenditure and the reliance on anti-poor tax policies. The industrial strategy it envisages is based on stimulating mining and related heavy industries into somehow becoming "sunrise" industries. In fact, their time has passed. There will be no significant rise of the gold, platinum, coal and iron sectors.

It is also GEAR-like in its wager that the global economy and opening further to foreign investors will rescue the South African economy. Even when SA had an iconic President in the form of Mandela, foreign investment failed to materialise. New president Ramaphosa should not be under the illusion that "Special Economic Zones", subsidised wages for big business and privatisation of state-owned enterprises will bring "manna from heaven".

The government should not have increased VAT! There are several alternatives that can provide sufficient funds to deal with the social and economic misery that the vast majority suffer. For example, and contrary to mainstream belief, personal income tax could have been adjusted to restore the effective tax rate on the rich as it was 12-15 years ago. This alone would realise over R100 billion. No doubt, we will now experience how unscrupulous shop owners increase prices by much more than 1 percentage point of VAT allow them.

A tax on meaningless financial trades can realise substantial resources. Halting illicit financial flows, base erosion and profit shifting would contribute tens of billions of rand to the budget and change the entire budgetary framework. If government wants to combat transfer pricing and avoidance measures it would speedily introduce a separate tax avoidance act.

**Given the fact that the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) is over-funded by up to R50 billion per year, borrowing at a regulated interest rate from GEPF can significantly bring down the state cost of borrowing, without affecting any benefits of current or future pensioners. This would cut government's annual interest bill of R180bn by at least 25% and stop this bill from increasing. It also has the merit of freeing us from some of the pressure of the financial markets and credit rating agencies.**

The process of initiating free higher education indicates what is possible when there is political will. The same should and could be done with regard to housing and health services. However, the start of this important reform is undermined by extensive cuts in basic education infrastructure expenditure. Over three years education infrastructure is cut by R14 billion in real terms, Health infrastructure by R1.2 billion and Human settlements by R9 billion.

**Over the next three years, government will slash R85.7 billion in expenditures compared to the 2017 budget. Provincial and local government will be at the coalface of these cuts. These cuts contradict the plan to combat youth unemployment, but Ramaphosa and Gigaba rely on wage subsidy programs and precarious employment. The government should instead oversee the roll out of socially owned and insourced renewable energy programs to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. The water crisis in Western, Northern and Eastern Cape shows how easily jobs can be found if we seriously want to address both unemployment and climate change.**

1 SARS 2017 Tax statistics pp 34 and 54.

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## WATER CRISIS

The Western Cape is currently in the grip of a severe drought, the worst in over 100 years. Dam levels at the beginning of February 2018 have been estimated to be on average at 25% of their capacity, some having less than 18%. A water crisis has been declared and water restrictions of varying degrees of severity have been instituted across the Western Cape. The most severe water restrictions thus far have been allocated for the City of Cape Town that has a Level 6B restriction. This allows a household to use only 50 litres of water per person per day. Other areas in the country such as the Eastern Cape as well as the Northern Cape are also suffering severe drought.

Areas such as the South Western Districts, Knysna, George, and Mossel Bay are adversely affected. Residents are required to conserve water in case of water being needed in the affected areas.

Water restriction legislation allows citizens to be heavily penalised when they use more water than the allotted quantity allocated by the municipal authorities. Households that fall foul of the rules are forced to have expensive water management devices fixed to their water supply lines at their own cost and pay a higher rate for water used. These penalties are especially tough on poor families.

The authorities have declared a “Day Zero” when, according to their calculations, the dams supplying Cape Town and surrounds with water will be dry. The question should be asked, could a “Day Zero” have been avoided? Could the imposition of penalties on the poor have been avoided? Could better management and utilisation of our water supplies have averted the spectacle of empty dams? Is the burden resulting from mismanagement of water resources being shifted onto the poor? It would appear that the authorities were alerted to the possibility of water shortages several times in the past few decades.

In 1990, an official organ, the Water Research Commission, warned that a water shortage would occur by 2007 when all Cape Town’s current water resources were fully committed. Environmentalists repeated the warning in 1991, calling for more efficient fresh water management. They recommended that the loss of fresh water draining into the sea be stemmed and that alternative water supplies, i.e. other than rainwater, should be sought. The commission repeated its concerns in a report to parliament in 2012. If the authorities did not heed these warnings, they would be guilty of gross mismanagement.

Access to clean water is a universal human right. By not heeding the warnings of impending water shortages and not planning to supplement the dammed-up river water by timeously searching for alternative water sources, is as good as denying people access to water. This is criminal. In the absence of ready access to fresh water, people’s lives are impoverished. The quality of sanitation, ablution and sewage removal declines leading to poor personal hygiene and an increase in microbial diseases. A decrease in the personal intake of appropriate quantities of fresh water leads to poor health.

The management of access to water is entrusted to the public representatives of the citizens of this country. Thus, their first concern should be appropriate water supply to those whom they represent and pay their salaries. Instead, we find that a disproportionate bulk of our available water is supplied to the business sector. The mines use vast quantities of water but the major part of the profits of mining activities land in the pockets of a few. The wine, beer and beverage industries, the water bottling companies are allowed to purchase unlimited amounts of water for sale to the public. Billions of litres of water are for sale to those who can afford it.

The water crisis could have been avoided. Now that we have a crisis, emergency measures have to be taken. Suddenly huge hikes in water tariffs become acceptable. Soon privatisation will look like an acceptable option. Is the water crisis going to be used to sell our water resources to big business so that we have to pay exorbitant prices for what is a universal human right and make a few people very rich?

There are 5122 dams registered in South Africa. 320 of these dams are owned by the state. That is where water for use by the public comes from. The country’s water resources should not be privately owned. Because water is a basic necessity and access to it a human right, all water resources belong to the citizens of the country. It is imperative that the state exercises proper care and management over water and ensures adequate availability to all people.

Finally, on a global scale, the greed for vast financial profits results in the over-exploitation of the world’s natural resources as well as the release of harmful greenhouse gases. These have the effect of vast, devastating droughts in the poorest parts of the world causing famine and suffering among many, South Africa included. We should be aware that, in South Africa and in the rest of the world, big business would chase the profits regardless of how it affects us, and make us pay for it.



### **Cuban Ambassador Rodolfo Benitez Verson and Cde Rebecca Hernandez**

#### **The Cuban Experience in building socialism**

Socialism has been demonized for many years around the world by the United States and its allies. As a result, it can be difficult to find an objective perspective on Cuba.

Cuba is probably one of the most misunderstood nations on Earth. Our achievements are largely ignored in the media. The propaganda against Cuba intentionally ignores the impact of the U.S. economic blockade.

Cuba is not perfect. Like anywhere, we face problems and struggles. There are many things that have not been achieved yet in Cuba but there are also many achievements. In our process, the unity of the Cuban people defending the socialist project has been a key element. In fact, we consider that the construction of unity is the most important task facing all true revolutions.

#### **How Has Socialism Benefited Cuba?**

How do we judge an economy? By the amount of money made by a minority of the population? By the number of luxury goods available or by the economy service to the people?

We are convinced that the distribution of resources within a country is more important than overall GNP when it comes to impacting the lives of the people. It's worth to explore how Cuba spends the very limited resources we have. Actions and facts speak louder than words.

#### **Let me mention just 7 examples:**

1. Cuba provides free high quality health care for all its population and obtains results similar or better than those of the most developed nations.
2. Life expectancy rate for Cubans, that was 59 years before the Revolution is now 79.1 years, higher than in many rich countries. Cuba has the highest number of doctors per capita in the world (1:155).
3. Our health care system is based on preventive medicine rather than the more expensive and inefficient

curative model. Therefore, health care is provided in neighbourhoods and not just in hospitals and clinics.

5. With an infant mortality rate of only 4.2 per thousand births, Cuba is the best performer on the Western Hemisphere and among the best in the world. According to the UN, if Latin America as a whole had the level of health care of Cuba, then 700 000 children would be saved every year.

6. The whole Cuban population receive totally free high quality education at all levels, from kindergarten through all college and university levels and this is guaranteed in the Cuban constitution. School uniforms and meals are also free.

7. Of the millions of children in the world who die annually from malnutrition, none of them is Cuban. According to the United Nations Fund for Children, Cuba is the only country in Latin America that does not have child malnutrition.

#### **Updating the Cuban Economic and social model**

The Cuban people are currently involved in a process of updating the national economic and social model. The strategic goal of the updating is to ensure a sustainable socialism.

State Planning will be consolidated as a cornerstone in Cuba. The main production means will continue to be under control of the State. This is an essential point, because property relations are determinants of any socio-economic system, since they have an impact on the reproduction of social relations, class and ideology.

In the coming months, as a result of our electoral process, new leaders will be elected at different levels to represent our people. A new Parliament and a new President of the Council of State will be elected. Continuity is guaranteed.

The Cuban Revolution is and will remain a Revolution of the working class. We will continue defending working class from neo-liberalism and capitalism.

The revolutionary society built under Commander Fidel Castro's leadership remains solid.



**Fidel Castro & Che Guevara**

# The Land as a Human Right

## THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION AND REVISION OF SYSTEMS OF LAND UTILISATION



Oppenheimer & Ramaphosa

### HAVE DEALS BEEN STRUCK WITH THE REAL OWNERS OF SA?

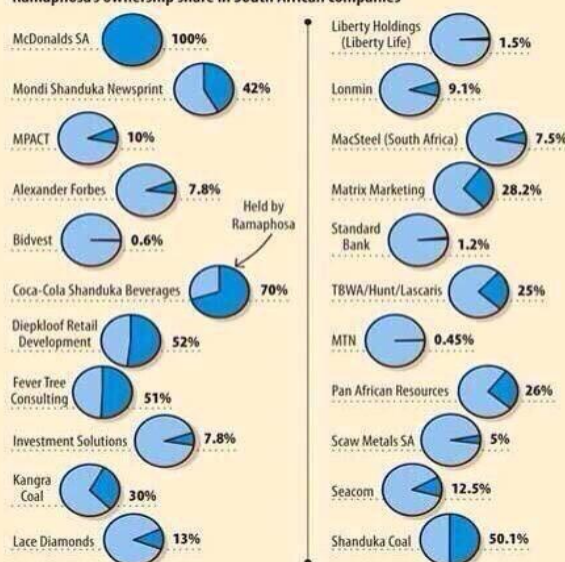
1. Parliament has passed a resolution to amend the constitution to allow for change to part of the Sunset Clauses viz. that would allow expropriation of land without compensation. Extra-parliamentary political organisations, parliamentary political parties, ordinary citizens, farmers, NGO's and commentators are all predicting either fundamental change, or land grabs that will lead to disaster.
2. The three main pillars of land reform are: **Land Redistribution** that transfers land from landowners to those previously denied ownership, **Land Restitution**, that involves the claiming back of land that the oppressed lost due to the various land acts, (and it is assumed, the **wars of dispossession**) and thirdly, **Tenure Reform** that secures land rights to those previously denied because of "race" discrimination.
3. WHY?
  - 3.1 The land will not be transferred to the state. It will be transferred to the "Black" middle class.
  - 3.2 Expropriation will be effected on only a few "White" commercial farmers.
  - 3.3 Most of the productive crop-growing farmlands belong to McCain, Koo and Kraft-Heinz/Pioneer Foods.
  - 3.4 This is part of the reason for the amendment to the resolution.
4. **WHAT ARE OUR DEMANDS!**
  - 4.1 The state shall protect the living environment for all its citizens and for future generations.
  - 4.2 The land shall be utilised for the economic benefit of all, in particular to eliminate malnutrition, starvation, poverty, and unemployment. A new division of the land in conformity with the existing rural population living on the land and working on the land is the immediate task of a socialist state and parliament. Absentee landlordism, the non-productive use of land, rack-renting and the encouragement of squatting shall be ended and be declared illegal.

- 4.3 For the agrarian revolution, which is central to the liberation of South Africa and its people, to the land is the immediate task of a socialist state and parliament. Absentee landlordism, the non-productive use of land, rack-renting and the encouragement of squatting shall be ended and be declared illegal.
- 4.4 For the agrarian revolution, which is central to the liberation of South Africa and its people, to materialize and succeed, the land shall be nationalised. All land-barons, who hog ownership of land for personal profit, and multi-national companies which increasingly dominate agriculture, shall be expropriated without compensation. In addition, local food production will be encouraged to reduce dependency on imported products.
- 4.5 The land, as a vital economic resource, shall be held in trust by the state on behalf of the entire population of South Africa. Individual land tenure would be considered for personal use; no exploitative labour will be permitted in such instances.
- 4.6 All mineral rights, mining concessions and exploration rights (land and marine) shall revert to the state to be used for the benefit of all.
- 4.7 A planned economy must have a balanced approach to the preservation of the environment and to the utilisation of all land and its resources: water, rivers, dams, lakes, fishing resources, game farming, tourism, etc., in all their ecological aspects so as to enhance the whole South African environment as a habitat for its people and its fauna and flora. Thus, energy generation through the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power must be phased out and replaced by renewable power sources.
- 4.8 Food and water security will be the right of all people.
- 4.9 In practice, industrial agriculture will be replaced by an agro ecological approach to the production of use values on the land.

### Why Cyril's lovin' it in business

Ramaphosa's ownership share in South African companies

Graphic: JOHN McCANN  
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